1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not
361 more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities de-
648 creased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inev-
311 [556] itable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

182 A major consequence of increased wealth differences has
157 been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*hiṣo*;
556 Hindi: *hinska*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this
754 term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises [562] from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fer- [426] tile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when [472] wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal, to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

• 437 Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

External Solidarity
A few Santal

• 437 [426] entrepreneurs have gained notoriety by their greed, but more have failed in business from having granted credit and finding it difficult to collect the debt. Traditional Santal are poor at haggling even with non-Santal, though they understand the basic principle of the market and may even be conversant with a variety of devices used to swindle the unsuspecting bargainer. They will rise early to buy at a market before it becomes crowded or to intercept dealers on their way who will sell for less while en route. They are often aware of price differences and will walk several miles to buy at the cheaper and sell at the more expensive market. But the traditional Santal, once at the market, is too eager a buyer, too poor a haggler, and too readily drawn into pleasant social intercourse to hold his own.

556 Despite envy, traditional Santal society developed something of a *modus vivendi* between rich and poor. At all festivals, at marriages in particular, and in everyday affairs the wealthy are required to validate their status by giving more than others. The wealthy are thus the greatest providers of "pleasure" for the community, and though there is envy as well as respect, considerable healing is accomplished and unity restored at major ceremonies to which the wealthy have contributed much. Also, in the traditional setting, even with wealth differences and the context of the market, the cultural gap between rich and poor [212] tended to be minimal. Fifty years ago the "elite" Santal, i.e., those with wealth and power, were almost totally illiterate; their style of life, judging by what one presently observes among illiterate and unschooled members of the elite, was only trivially different from that of their less well-situated neighbors. In terms of "likeness" the solidarity of the community was not greatly disturbed by wealth differences.

ooo Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

beans horṛd, reher, ghaṅgra, sutri; further alpalua, vegetables, fowls, pigs, goats, hares, peafowls, the Indian Gaur, the Samber Stag, birds, and the winged creation. And salt they were preparing from saline earth. They scrape off and bring some earth, mix it up in an earthenware pot and strain it with water; they boil the water, and when the water evaporates, the salt comes there. Because it is very pungent, they cover it up in a cloth and bury it in hot ashes; then it becomes tasty salt. They were preparing this during the cold season. Oil they were pressing out of different forest fruits; they were weaving clothes for themselves. People of the Ṭuḍu sept were making all kinds of implements of iron; and they were themselves making winnowing-fans and baskets, earthenware vessels, and so on. Whether we formerly had gold or not, we do not know; but in the old country they called gold samanom. Later on people of the Baske sept were transacting business, buying and selling by barter, and since rupees and pice have appeared, we buy and sell using money. Formerly also the village people were bartering, some bartered buffaloes for goats, some goats for pigs, and so on.

178 433 [262] [263] [184] 178 497 • [184]

Nowadays people of both sexes have become very lazy; they do not press oil, neither do they prepare salt; they do not much weave cloth either; they buy everything; thereby we Santals are becoming poor, and we are becoming deeply involved in debt to the money-lenders. [426]

v. About debts and loans.

In former times no people were getting into debt or taking loans from the money-lenders; and there were no money-lenders either. In the Sikhar country the money-lenders found us for the first time. There the first money-lender with the Santals lived in Nanduara. From that time up to now we are in their hands, and they are tearing us up like vultures. By constantly paying we become numb; still the debt never comes to an end. They say: "If a seer has come into the house, it will never get out again"; "a Deko usurer, an old hyena, even old bones they crunch". Really it was also due to hardship in connexion with these that we ran away from Sikhar. At first they did not unrighteously charge us interest to such a degree; they were taking only 25 pct., in paddy or money; but gradually they commenced to charge exorbitantly. For a debt of three or four rupees they would without justice or reason drive pair after pair of plough-cattle away, and if you remonstrated with them, they would at once commence to strike.

178 426 [539]

But there is fault also on our side. Foolishly the Santals run into the hands of the usurers; whether they will be able to pay back or not, this they do not think of, and when they have what is needed to pay with, they will not pay at once; consequently interest upon interest is heaped up; thereupon the money-lender comes and carries all and everything away. And in the present age many Santals also deceitfully cheat the usurers and money-lenders of what is their right.

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village and who also receive payment in cash and in kind for their work. They are thoroughly familiar with Santali, but their mother tongue is the village Bengali of the area. They observe their own caste rules and do not intermarry with the Santals, with whom they live on excellent terms. They have no part in the Santal village cult, and they make no contributions when collections are made throughout the village for festivals. Their own cult is locally characterized by *Dharma* worship; in one village a post is planted in the ground at the end of the month of *Pus*. On the first day of *Magh* (mid-January) the village Kamar stands on top of this post with a white cock in his hands, and after bowing to the four corners of the compass in turn he releases the cock, saying: "Take, Dharma, we give it to you." There is then a scramble among the Santal spectators to catch it, and the man who does so is rewarded by the gift of a sheep. This ceremony goes on alongside the Santal festival which is taking place at the same time.

Occasionally there are in Santal villages isolated houses belonging to people of other castes. In one village one finds a Muci family, leather workers whose chief occupation is to make and mend drums; in another a Tanti family, who are weavers. The Santals do not have a great regard for the Bauri, the most numerous of the cultivating castes in the area apart from themselves. Their chief complaint about the Bauri is that the latter will eat food left over by anyone, a practice which fills the Santals with horror. On the other hand, there are frequently close friendships between individual Santals and men of other castes. The practice of sealing a friendship by a symbolic exchange of gifts is prevalent, and there are instances where Santals have entered into such friendships with Bauris and, indeed, with folk of other races who are of the same sex. The usual method of cementing such friendships is known as the "flower friendship", which takes the form of an exchange of garlands, followed by mutual salutations and sharing beer or food together. Friendships sealed in this way result in an intimate relationship, a real sharing of burdens as well as of joys.

While some forms of exploitation have been checked, there are still many who appear to thrive on the ignorance of the Santal. I witnessed a scene in the village street of Kuchliaghati when a *Deko* trader was having dealings with the women of the village. He had come to collect from them quantities of resin from the *babla* tree, a species of acacia, and he was paying them by exchanging equal weights of salt for the resin. The

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439 women had no notion of the market price of their resin and
•[437] were quite content to be paid in this way. The same man had been dealing with that village for many years, and he must have made tremendous profits. Furthermore, on this particular occasion my companion, who was himself a sharp-witted *Deko*, soon realized that the scales were heavily tipped in the trader's favour. On this being pointed out, the latter decamped before his customers were aware of the reason for his haste. One finds
427 also that it is, or has been until very recently, customary for the cultivator in Bengal to pay sums of money in excess of the legal rent to his landlord. The Santal is one of the worst sufferers from this practice, and he continues to pay more than he should for the sake of peace, even when he has been made aware of the fact.

648 Santals have not been caught up into the political activities
668 of the last thirty years, for the Congress or nationalist movement is represented locally by those whom they regard as their worst enemies. They have shared some of the excitement engendered during periods of Mass Civil Disobedience, though their own contribution is liable to express itself in unorthodox forms. During the first such movement, in 1920–21, word spread that Gandhi rule had begun and it was Gandhi's order to
[231] boycott everything white-coloured. In some places Santals slaughtered large numbers of their poultry in consequence, and in one or two instances even goats and sheep were slain. Their political education has advanced since, and the disillusion which followed their "sacrifice" ensured that there would be no repetition of such tactics. The next great Disobedience movement, in 1930, made more impression largely because on that occasion the Congress programme stressed the boycott of the licensed liquor shops. The Santals welcomed this aspect of the programme, not from any zeal for temperance, but because they soon came to see from experience that the government staff available for enforcing the excise laws was hopelessly
[233] inadequate to its task. The practice of illicit distilling, which had previously been held in check by respect for the law, became widespread. Later the extension of the franchise under the Government of India Act of 1935 has shown them that their vote has power. Some of the more politically conscious, infected by the communal situation and influenced by the demand for a separate aboriginal province in Bihar, consider it a grievance that Santals are counted among the "Scheduled castes" on the electoral roll, and think they should be granted separate representation.